

AGRA UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES

DELIVERED BY
J. P. Naik,
Adviser, Primary Education

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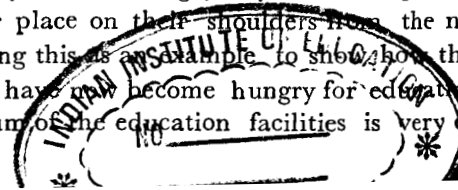
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LECTURE I

SOME PROBLEMS OF RURAL EDUCATION

The subject on which I propose to share my thinking with you this evening is 'Some Problems of Rural Education'. I have used the word 'some' deliberately because it would not be possible to cover all the different aspects of this complex problem in the course of a single discussion. I would also like to make it clear that I do not bring any standardised solutions. All that I have been able to do is to understand some of the major problems in this field and it is this understanding that I propose to place before you. I would be glad if you can suggest some solutions.

2. The first aspect of rural education in India as it strikes me is the inadequate provision of schooling facilities at all stages of education. Let us begin with the primary stage where the rural areas are more plentifully provided than at others. According to the educational survey recently carried out, there are about eight lakhs of rural habitations in this country and about three lakhs of them are, even to this day, without even primary schools. There are several parts in the country where there is not a single school even within a radius of twenty to thirty miles. This, believe me, is not due to any lack of awakening in the countryside. When the Education Secretary once paid a visit to the Naga Hills, the tribal people came to him and said that the one thing they wanted to have was a school. All that they asked for was a teacher for whom they were prepared to provide a house and, because of the inaccessibility of their village, they were even prepared to carry him to their place on their shoulders from the nearest road. I am quoting this as an example to show how the people in rural areas have now become hungry for education and even the minimum of the education facilities is very often denied to them.



* 3. At the secondary stage, the disparity of educational provision in urban and rural areas becomes all the greater. Only twenty per cent of our total population lives in towns and about fifty per cent of our secondary schools are in urban areas only. In the Educational Survey, two simple standards were laid down to determine the need of educational facilities at the middle and secondary school stages, viz., that there should be a middle school within three miles of the residence of every child and that there should be a secondary school within five miles of the residence of every child. These are not ambitious targets, and yet, it was found that 16,000 additional primary schools and about 10,000 secondary schools would be required to meet the needs of rural areas.

4. At the collegiate stage and in fields like technical education, the disparities of educational provision between urban and rural areas are the highest. The number of colleges and technical institutions of a high level which are situated in rural areas would be less than a hundred and it would be no exaggeration to say that most of these institutions are situated in towns and cities.

5. It will thus be seen that most of our educational institutions today, especially at the secondary and higher stages, have been located in urban areas. This has been the result of a historical development in which education first began in towns and cities and slowly spread towards the villages. In the beginning, all the new schools, even at the primary stage, were situated in towns. Later on, primary schools began to spread out to villages, but secondary schools were mostly confined to urban areas. By about 1921, even secondary schools began to be started in rural areas, but colleges and other institutions still continued to be urban-centred. It is only during the last ten or fifteen years that institutions of higher education also are being started in rural areas. But the movement is too small in size and too recent in character to be

significant. We have thus a contrast between a population which is largely centred in rural areas and an educational system which is mostly centred in urban areas. This is diametrically opposite to our ancient traditions. In the past, the best educational centres were located in sylvan areas, in *Ashrams* of the great *Rishis*, and people from urban areas, even the sons and daughters of the kings, were sent to these sylvan retreats for their education. The people believed that these quiet places with their close contact with Nature were more suited for the proper education of young people than the towns and the cities. We now seem to think the other way and a stream of students from our rural areas continually migrates to urban areas for education and this continues to happen in spite of the fact that we realise the several demoralising influences which exist, and are increasing, in our urban environment.

6. This unhappy situation has two very bad consequences. The first is the privilege which attaches merely to the place of birth. Imagine the different opportunities in life that are open to a child born in Delhi as compared with a tribal child born in the forests of Orissa. It is merely an accident of a place of birth; and yet the child born in Delhi has all educational opportunities in India open to it while the tribal child born in the forest may never even become aware of a primary school. Such inequality of educational opportunities is the very negation of a democratic social order based on justice. We shall, therefore, have to give serious attention to this thought and adopt measures which will at least equalise the educational provision in rural areas with that in urban areas. Personally, I would prefer the provision in rural areas to be greater so that children from urban areas could be sent out, to some extent at least, to rural areas for the prosecution of their studies.

7. So far I have spoken only about the quantitative aspect of the provision of educational facilities. Great as the differences are in this respect, they are greater still from the qua-

litative point of view and the rural schools, by and large, compare very unfavourably with their counterparts in urban areas. An average primary school in a rural area is inferior to an average primary school in the urban area and the same can be said of secondary schools and collegiate institutions as well. The reasons are obvious. The resources of rural institutions are meagre in every way. Their enrolments are small. Where an income from fee is expected, the rural schools get much less income because their rates of fees are lower and the percentage of freeships has to be larger. The grants to rural schools are not proportionately as large. The average teacher who agrees to go and work in a rural area is generally one who has been unable to get a job in an urban area. It is said that only those who do not get any other employment come to the teaching profession. If that is true, the teachers in rural areas will have to be described as the reject of the rejected. The examination results of the rural schools are generally poorer; their buildings and equipment are not satisfactory and on the whole, their level of functioning is much lower. Since the syllabi for urban and rural schools are the same and the only difference between them is one of quality, one may even define a rural school as "an urban school conducted with greater inefficiency".

8. Equality of educational opportunity does not mean only quantitative equality of provision. It also means qualitative equality and, in a democracy, the rural children have a right to expect the same *standard* of education to be provided for them as is provided for the children in rural areas. This aspect of the problem is even more difficult to be tackled. But we shall have to tackle it, sooner or later. We will have to place larger resources at the disposal of rural schools through a properly organised system of grants-in-aid, and measures will have to be taken, through provision of higher scales of pay or allowances or the provision of quarters, to induce the best of our teachers to live and work in rural areas.

9. The second problem of rural education to which I

would like to invite your attention refers to objects. What are the objects of rural education? Should rural education be different from urban education and, if so, in what way? These are some of the questions which are most frequently raised; and, as may be easily anticipated, these have become very controversial questions on which strong views are held on both sides. There are some who believe that all education is one; that there should be no distinction between urban and rural education; and that whatever is given for urban areas must also be provided for rural areas. There are others, however, who challenge this viewpoint, and who believe that there is a basic difference between the demands of life in rural areas and those of life in urban areas and that it is essential to develop a system of rural education which is different from that in urban areas in several important respects. Their thesis is that education has to be related to the conditions of life. At the moment, there is a wide gulf in the conditions of life as they exist in rural and urban areas. A person who loves to live and work in rural areas, therefore, will have to be trained in a radically different manner from the one who is expected to live and work in an urban area.

10. Probably, the controversy would be understood better if we analyse the objectives of education itself. All educational process, as is well known, can be divided into three groups of activities: (1) imparting of knowledge; (2) teaching of the necessary skills; and (3) the development of the essential aptitudes, interests and values. In so far as the first group of activities is concerned, there need be no difference between urban and rural education. All knowledge is the same, whether taught in urban areas or in rural areas. Ultimately, therefore, the content of education would have to be the same for urban and rural areas, although the curriculum at different stages of education may have to be suitably altered to meet the differing conditions of life. For instance, a rural child may find it difficult to understand electricity, telephone, etc., and it may have to be taught the

subjects a little later than an urban child. On the other hand, subjects of nature study can be taught more easily and earlier to a rural child. Such differences in grading cannot really constitute a major distinction and, insofar as the content of education is concerned, the needs of rural and urban education may be regarded as identical.

11. With regard to the second objective, *viz.*, teaching skills, some differentiation will have to be made because the pattern of occupations in rural and urban areas varies considerably. Certain skills like reading and writing will have to be common both to the urban and rural areas; but certain other skills, particularly vocational skills, will have to be different. A child who is expected to live and work in a rural area will have to be taught agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, smithy or any other trade which it is possible to practice in the rural areas at the present moment or within the next ten to twenty years. The child in urban areas, on the other hand, will have to be taught skills which will make him fit for entering on a vocation normally available in our city life. The differences in this objective of education, therefore, are significant and will have to be taken note of in planning the educational provision in rural areas.

12. These differences become greater still in respect of the third objective, *viz.*, the development of desirable aptitudes, interests and values. A careful study of the social environment in urban and rural areas will show that living in villages is a way of life which is materially different from that of the cities. A temperament which is happy in the crowds, the noise and the stress and hustle of city life will be miserable in the quiet and slow tempo of life in a village. Similarly, a person who loves the hills, the trees and brooks, who desires to remain more by himself than in company or to commune more with Nature than with men, and who loves the peace of the countryside will find himself in a mad house if forced to stay in an urban area. The difference between urban and rural education in this respect, therefore, would be almost

fundamental. All things considered, therefore, it does appear that there is need to make some distinction between urban and rural education. It is unfortunate that the right type of differentiation has not yet been worked out. I hope it will be possible to do so in the near future.

13. It is inevitable that this discussion of the distinction between urban and rural education should get mixed up with the issue of migration from villages to cities which is the third and the last problem I propose to discuss this evening. That there is a large-scale migration from rural to urban areas at present is a matter of fact which every one has to admit. The only two problems that we have to decide are :

- (1) Is this migration desirable, and
- (2) If it is not desirable, what can be done to reduce it?

There are some advocates of rural education who believe that the objective of rural education should be to prevent children of rural areas from migrating to towns and they would judge the success of the programme of rural education from the effect it would produce in reducing this migration. They also believe that this migration from rural to urban areas is a very bad social trend of the day and hence they advocate a proper development of rural education as a panacea of great significance to this social ill. There are several others who challenge this viewpoint. They think that this migration from rural to urban areas is not only necessary but even inescapable if the pressure of population on land is to be reduced. They, therefore, argue that one of the objectives of rural education must be to enable a rural student to fit himself for a future career in urban areas. They also feel that the main objective of rural education should be to accelerate the migration from rural to urban areas rather than the reverse.

14. Probably the point at issue would be clear if I place before you two of my very interesting experiences. The first was when I received an application from a small rural secondary school asking for a grant-in-aid to start a course

in shorthand and typewriting and in commercial art. I wondered why a school in such remote rural surroundings should ever need to teach these courses. At the same time, I also received another application where a school in a rural setting asked for permission to discontinue the teaching of the agricultural course which had been given to it about three years earlier. This was an equally surprising situation and as both the schools were not far apart, I paid a personal visit to them. The rural school which had asked for a course in shorthand and typewriting and commercial art, was located in a small village of 5000 population about 200 miles south of Bombay. The Headmaster believed, and quite rightly, that his one objective should be to pick out brilliant boys from the village and to train them up for a good job in Bombay. His main objective was to provide an escape from the extremely poor and killing environment round him, an environment which had no power to improve, and the results had justified this policy. During the last twenty years the school had been in existence, some hundreds of its students had been trained for urban careers, had gone out to Bombay and had been earning a decent wage which they would have never hoped to get in their own native surroundings. They had also helped the school to collect about Rs. 60,000 for a building. I did not have the heart to say 'no' to him and I believed that, in the circumstances, he was doing the best possible service for the students in whose wellbeing he was really interested. When I went to the other school which had been teaching the agricultural course unsuccessfully for about three years, I found the reverse side of the same situation. The parents were not interested in the agricultural course. Knowing the miserable lot of the average agriculturist, they all wanted their children to escape it and to take to some other vocation, be it that of a clerk, a teacher, or even a peon. They were indignant at the idea that their children should be taught agriculture. They argued that, if agriculture must be taught, they could teach it better in their own homes. They sent their children to schools and

paid fees because they desired them to learn something else. This opposition had mounted up to such an extent that the school was in danger of being closed down and I had reluctantly to agree to the discontinuance of the agricultural course.

15. These two examples will throw light on some important aspects of the problem. Education reacts to environment in two ways—either it provides an escape or it gives a determination and a skill to change it. The first of this is the easier and the commoner approach and we should not be surprised if our rural schools are at present the agencies of increasing the exodus to the cities. They may inspire a small microscopic minority of brave souls to remain in the village and try to improve it. Such exceptions can never prove the rule and we must admit that our rural education today is organised mainly as an escapist defence from the drabness of rural existence. I also do not see how this situation can be changed within the near future.

16. I think that this problem of migration from rural to urban areas needs much closer examination. It is not bad in itself and I believe that a rapid urbanisation is inevitable in the process of industrialisation which has been started in the country. What is bad is the helplessness of its present character. People are uprooted from villages, not because they want to leave them, but because the alternative to migration is starvation. They also go to cities, not because they love the cities nor because the cities are prepared to receive them, but because they have nowhere else to go to. This migration, therefore, is creating problems for urban areas without solving any in the rural areas. What we have to do is to change this character of the migration. People should leave rural areas for cities because it is desirable that they should do so and the cities should be properly prepared to receive such immigrants. Moreover, people who want to continue in villages should find it worthwhile to do so and even those urban people who so desire, should find it advantageous to move to rural areas.

17. Such a situation can be brought about mainly by a process of economic reconstruction and the provision of adequate amenities in rural life. The great weakness of our rural areas today is that they do not afford adequate and sufficiently remunerative employment opportunities to our young men and women. Our first task, therefore, is to create such employment opportunities through any methods—decentralised production, organisation of larger services in rural areas, etc. If such employment opportunities are created, the exodus from rural to urban areas would diminish automatically to a great extent. It will diminish still further if basic amenities such as good houses, communications, good drinking water, electricity and facilities for educational and medical relief are provided on a satisfactory basis in all rural areas. It is the absence of these facilities that drives many a person from the villages to the cities and their provision would diminish the exodus or even start some process the other way. Rural education can play a very important role in the wake of such an economic reconstruction, but not by itself alone. As Brubacher has said : “The schools cannot initiate a revolution; they can only complete and consolidate a change decided elsewhere—whether by bullets or by ballots”. A revolution in rural life which will provide the minimum basic amenities of life and adequate and sufficiently remunerated employment opportunities cannot be initiated by rural education alone. It will have to be a programme of economic reconstruction pursued by itself. But once such a programme is undertaken, a properly organised system of rural education can complete and consolidate it and that is the main role it has to play.

LECTURE II

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN EDUCATION

A HISTORICAL SURVEY (1773-1950)

In the course of this talk, I propose to review the changing role of the Government of India in education from 1773 (when the Regulating Act was passed and the Government of India came into existence) to 1950 (when the present Constitution was adopted).

2. *From 1773 to 1833.* The Government of India may be said to have been born with the Regulating Act of 1773 which designated the Governor in Council of Bengal as the Governor-General in Council of Bengal and gave him a limited authority over the Governors of Bombay and Madras. This authority was substantially increased by the Pitt's India Act of 1784. But prior to 1833, education in India had made but little progress (it had, in fact, been accepted as a State responsibility only as late as in 1813) and the Governor-General of Bengal did little to control or direct the educational policies of the other parts of India. At this time, therefore, 'education' may be said to have been a 'Provincial' matter, subject only to the distant co-ordinating authority of the Court of Directors in England.

3. *From 1833 to 1870.* The Charter Act of 1833 introduced unitary system of Government. Under this arrangement, all revenues were raised in the name of the Central Government and all expenditure needed its approval. The Provincial Governments could not spend even one rupee or create a post, however small, without the approval of the Government of India which also was the only law-making body for the country as a whole. In other words, all

executive, financial and legislative authority was exclusively vested in the Central Government and the Provinces merely acted as its agents.

4. As may easily be imagined, education thus became a purely 'Central' subject in 1833 and the entire authority in education and responsibility for it came to be vested in the Government of India. This excessively centralized system, which became more and more inconvenient as education began to expand and the territories of the Company began to grow, remained in force till 1870. As administrative difficulties began to grow, some small powers were delegated to Provincial Governments from time to time and their proposals, as those of the 'authority on the spot', carried great weight. But the character of the system remained unaltered throughout the period and education continued to be a Central subject in every sense of the term.

5. *From 1870 to 1921.* In 1870, however, Lord Mayo introduced a system of administrative decentralization under which the Provincial Governments were made responsible for all expenditure on certain services—inclusive of education—and were given, for that purpose, a fixed grant-in-aid and certain sources of revenue. Education thus became a 'Provincial subject' for purposes of day-to-day administration. But it has to be remembered that the Central Government still retained large powers of control over it. For instance, both the Central and Provincial Legislatures had concurrent powers to legislate on all educational matters. It was because of this concurrent legislative jurisdiction, that the Government of India could pass the Indian Universities Act in 1904 and could also legislate for the establishment of new universities. Of the new universities established during this period in British India, only one—Lucknow—was established by an Act of the U.P. Legislature. All others—Punjab (1882), Allahabad (1887), Banaras (1915), Patna (1917), Aligarh (1920) and Dacca (1920) were established by the Central Legislature. It

was for the same reason that Gokhale could then introduce his Bill for compulsory primary education in India in the Central Legislature, although it failed to pass. In administrative matters, the sanction of the Government of India was needed to the creation of all new posts above a given salary and in 1897, the Indian Educational Service was created and placed in charge of all the important posts in the Provincial Education Departments. In financial matters, the powers reserved to the Central Government were very wide. Its approval was required to all expenditure above a given figure and to the over-all budget of the Provinces. These large powers of control and supervision were justified on the ground that the Provincial Governments were responsible to the British Parliament through the Government of India. But whatever the cause, the net result of these powers was to make education, not so much a 'Provincial subject' as a 'concurrent subject' with two reservations : (1) the authority delegated to the Provincial Governments was fairly large ; and (2) the interest shown by the Government of India in education was very uneven and depended mostly upon the personalities of the Governor-Generals—a Ripon or a Curzon could make education look almost like a 'Central subject' while, at other times, it became almost a 'Provincial subject'.

6. It must also be noted that the interest and authority of the Government of India was not restricted to any particular field, although it naturally showed very great interest in university education. It appointed the Indian Universities Commission of 1917-19. As stated earlier, it passed the Indian Universities Act in 1904 and also incorporated most of the new universities created in this field. It also sanctioned large grants-in-aid for the improvement of secondary and primary education and for the introduction of science teaching. It also reviewed and laid down policies in such matters as the education of girls, or Anglo-Indians and the establishment of schools of art. The Indian Education Commission of 1882 and the Government Resolutions on Educational

Policy issued in 1904 and 1913 covered almost every aspect of education. In short, the view taken in this period was that education is a subject of *national* importance and that the Government of India must hold itself responsible for the formulation of overall educational policy : and this view was particularly strengthened in the period between 1900 and 1921 because educational developments were intimately connected with the growth of national consciousness and the struggle for independence. The main function of a Federal Government in education—to decide national policies in education—was thus clearly understood and accepted during this period.

7. The need of expert technical advice in education at the Government of India level was also felt during this period and the post of a Director-General of Education—who was to be an educationist and not a civilian and whose duty it was to advise the Government of India on educational matters—was created by Curzon and at the present time, when the very need of an advisory educational service at the Centre is being challenged in certain quarters, it may be well to recall Curzon's defence of the creation of this post.

“My last topic is the desirability of creating a Director-General of Education in India. Upon this point I will give my opinions for what they may be worth. To understand the case we must first realise what the existing system and its consequences are. Education is at present a sub-heading of the work of the Home Department, already greatly overstrained. When questions of supreme educational interest are referred to us for decision, we have no expert to guide us, no staff trained to the business, nothing but the precedents recorded in our files to fall back upon. In every other department of scientific knowledge—sanitation, hygiene, forestry, mineralogy, horse-breeding, explosives—the Government possesses expert advisers. In education, the most complex and most momentous of all, we have none. We have to rely upon the opinions

of officers who are constantly changing, and who may very likely never have had any experience of education in their lives. Let me point to another anomaly. Under the system of decentralisation that has necessarily and, on the whole, rightly been pursued, we have little idea of what is happening in the provinces, until, once every five years, a gentleman comes round, writes for the Government of India the *Quinquennial Review*, makes all sorts of discoveries of which we know nothing, and discloses shortcomings which in hot haste we then proceed to redress. How and why this systemless system has been allowed to survive for all these years it passes my wit to determine. Now that we relise it, let us put an end to it for ever. I do not desire an Imperial Education Department, packed with pedagogues, and crusted with officialism. I do not advocate a Minister or Member of Council for Education. I do not want anything that will turn the universities into a Department of the State, or fetter the colleges or schools with bureaucratic handcuffs. But I do want someone at headquarters who will prevent the Government of India from going wrong, and who will help us to secure that community of principle and of aim without which we go drifting about like a deserted hulk on chopping seas. I go further, and say that the appointment of such an officer, provided that he be himself an expert and an enthusiast, will check the perils of narrowness and pedantry, while his custody of the leading principles of Indian Education will prevent those vagaries of policy and sharp revulsions of action which distract our administration without reforming it. He would not issue orders to the Local Governments; but he would be required to advise the Government of India. Exactly the same want was felt in America, where decentralisation and devolution are even more keenly cherished, and had been carried to greater lengths, than here; and it was met by the creation of a Central Bureau of Education in 1867, which has since then done invaluable

able work in coordinating the heterogeneous application of common principles. It is for consideration whether such an official in India as I have suggested should, from time to time, summon a representative Committee or Conference, so as to keep in touch with the local jurisdictions, and to harmonise our policy as a whole.”*

8. The creation of this post, and the further creation of a separate Education Department in the Government of India in 1910 and the establishment of a Central Bureau of Education in 1915 made it possible to develop some other federal functions in education. For example, it is the duty of Government of India to collect educational data from the Provinces and to publish periodical reviews on the progress of education in the country—the *Clearing House function*. The Indian Education Commission (1882) recommended that the Central Government should bring out Quinquennial Reviews on the progress of education in India. Consequently, the first Quinquennial Review on the progress of education in India was published in 1886-87 and subsequent reviews were brought out in 1891-92, 1896-97, 1901-02, 1905-06, 1911-12, 1916-17 and 1921-22. Annual reviews of education were also published from 1913-14 onwards in all years in which the Quinquennial Reviews were not published.

9. Similarly, it is the duty of a Federal Government to carry out studies in educational problems (as part of its responsibility to provide leadership in educational thought) from time to time and to publish their findings. In particular, it is the responsibility of a Federal Government to study such developments in other countries as are likely to be of help in developing education at home. That both these responsibilities were understood, accepted and even fulfilled with a great competence in certain areas, can be seen from the publications issued by the Government of India during this period. Moreover, the Government of India also published reports

on important events of the period. In short, the research and publications function of the Federal Government was fully accepted and established during the period under review.

10. *The co-ordinating function* of a Federal Government was also recognised during this period. A reference to that has already been made in the speech of Curzon quoted above. It was he who convened the first Conference of the Directors of Public Instruction in India at Simla in 1901. Then started a regular practice of convening such conferences for taking a periodical review of educational developments. An Educational Conference was held at Allahabad in 1911 and another Conference of the Directors of Public Instruction was held in 1917. With the passage of time, the need for such co-ordination was felt all the more keenly and a Central Advisory Board of Education was organised in 1920 with a view to assisting the Provincial Governments with expert advice.

11. Another function of a Federal Government to be recognised during this period was grant of financial assistance for educational developments in the Provinces. Reference has already been made to the financial decentralisation introduced by Mayo in 1870. That system continued to be in force in 1876-77 when a system of ‘shared revenues’ was introduced. Under this system, certain revenues were exclusively designated as ‘Central’; certain others were designated as exclusively ‘Provincial’; and the remainder were designated as ‘Divided’ and their receipts were shared between the Central and Provincial Governments according to an agreed contract which remained in force for a period of five years at a time. Thus the quinquennial contracts were revised in 1882-83, 1886-87, 1891-92 and 1896-97. In 1904, they were declared to be *quasi-permanent*, i. e., not liable to be changed except in a grave emergency, and in 1912, they were declared as *permanent*. It will thus be seen that, under these financial arrangements, the entire expendi-

* Lord Curzon in India, Vol. II, pp. 54-56

ture on education was to be borne by the Provincial Governments within the resources allocated to them.

12. As may be easily imagined, these arrangements made the Provincial revenues fairly inelastic and they were unable to keep pace with rapidly growing commitments of an expanding educational system. The Government of India, therefore, started the practice of giving grants-in-aid to Provincial Governments for educational development over and above the agreed contract arrangements. Thus the fifth important function of the Federal Government, *viz.*, *financial assistance*, also came to be accepted during this period. Fortunately, the period between 1900 and 1921 was a period of boom in world finances and the Government of India had large surpluses in its budgets. It was, therefore, comparatively easy to allocate a share of these surpluses to the Provincial Governments for expenditure on education. The magnitude of these grants can be seen from Annexure II. It may also be stated that most of these grants were *specific purpose grants*, *i. e.*, the Government of India decided the developmental policies to be adopted and earmarked the grants given for the implementation of specified approved policies. Only a few of these were *general grants* which were at the disposal of the Provincial Governments for expenditure in any manner they liked.

13. *From 1921 to 1947.* Between 1870 and 1921 therefore, the day-to-day administration of education was delegated to the Provincial Governments and the Government of India continued to function as a Federal Government with five distinct functions which came to be recognised, *viz.*, the functions of policy-making, clearing house of information, research and publications, co-ordination and financial assistance.

14. With the coming into force of the Government of India Act, 1919, however, the position changed completely.

The basic idea underlying this Act was that the Government of India should continue to be responsible to the Secretary of State for India and that the functions of the Provincial Governments should be divided into two parts—the reserved part being responsible to the Government of India and the transferred part being under the control of elected Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures. As a corollary to this decision, it was also agreed that the Government of India should have very little or no control over the transferred departments because the Ministers could not be simultaneously responsible to the Government of India as well as to their elected legislatures. These were basic political decisions and it was rather unfortunate that the division of authority in education between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments had to be made on these political considerations and not on the fundamental educational issues involved. One would have preferred that problems such as the following should have been raised and discussed on this occasion :

- (1) To what extent is education a national problem?
- (2) What should be the role of a Federal Government in education ? and
- (3) What should be the relationship between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments in educational matters ?

But, unfortunately, all such basic problems were ignored and the only questions discussed from a political angle were the following :

- (1) Should education be a transferred subject or not ? and
- (2) What should be the control which the Government of India should have over education ?

15. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report suggested that the 'guiding principle should be to include in the transferred list

those departments which afford most opportunity for local knowledge and social service, those in which Indians have shown themselves to be keenly interested, those in which mistakes which may occur though serious would not be irremediable, and those which stand most in need of development.* In pursuance of this principle, it was but natural to expect that education would be classed as a transferred subject, although one does not feel very happy to be told that mistakes in education are not really very important. It was, therefore, decided that, excepting for the following few reservations, education should be a Provincial subject and transferred to the control of the Indian Ministers :

1. The Banares Hindu University and such other new universities as may be declared to be all-India by the Governor-General-in-Council were excluded on the ground that these institutions were of an all-India character and had better be dealt with by the Government of India itself ;
2. Colleges for Indian chiefs and educational institutions maintained by the Governor-General-in-Council for the benefit of members of His Majesty's Forces or other public servants, or their children were also excluded on the ground that these institutions ought to be under the direct control of the Government of India ; and
3. The education of Anglo-Indians and Europeans was treated as a Provincial but a *reserved* subject.

The authority to legislate on the following subjects was reserved for the Central legislature, mainly with a view to enabling the Government of India to take suitable action on the report of the Calcutta University Commission :

- (a) Questions regarding the establishment, constitution and functions of new universities ;

- (b) Questions affecting the jurisdiction of any university outside its Province ; and
- (c) Questions regarding the Calcutta University and the reorganisation of secondary education in Bengal (for a period of five years only after the introduction of the Reforms).

As a corollary to this decision, it was also decided that the Government of India should have no control over education in the Provinces.

16. Thus came about what the Hartog Committee has rightly described as the 'divorce' of the Government of India from education. As could easily be imagined, the results were far from happy.

The Central interest in education disappeared almost completely after 1921 ; and when the need for retrenchment arose in 1923, the first victims were (1) the Education Department of the Government of India which lost its independent existence and was amalgamated with other departments, (2) the Central Advisory Board of Education which was dissolved, and (3) the Central Bureau of Education which was closed down. The Central grants to the Provinces for educational development also disappeared, even the few powers of legislation reserved under the Act of 1919 were not exercised, and the Government of India did little beyond the clearing house function of publishing the annual and quinquennial reviews of the progress of education in India.

17. The Hartog Committee strongly criticised this unhappy position and said :

"We are of opinion that the divorce of the Government of India from education has been unfortunate ; and, holding as we do, that education is essentially a national service, we are of opinion that steps should be taken to consider anew the relation of the Central Government

* Montagu-Chelmsford Report, para. 238

with this subject. We have suggested that the Government of India should serve as a centre of educational experience of the different provinces. But we regard the duties of the Central Government as going beyond that. We cannot accept the view that it should be entirely relieved of all responsibility for the attainment of universal primary education. It may be that some of the provinces, in spite of all efforts, will be unable to provide the funds necessary for that purpose, and the Government of India should, therefore, be constitutionally enabled to make good such financial deficiencies in the interests of India as a whole.”*

It is also interesting to know that, for some time after 1921, there was an outburst of strong provincial feelings and the divorce of the Government of India from education was even welcomed in some quarters. But it did not take the Provincial Governments long to realise that this was a mistake and that something had to be done to create a national agency and machinery for the development of education. It was, therefore, possible to revise the earlier decision and the Government of India revived the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1935; the Central Bureau of Education was also revived, on a recommendation made by the Central Advisory Board of Education, in 1937; and finally the old Education Department was also revived as a Ministry of Education in 1946. The decisions of 1921 were, therefore, very largely undone by 1947.

18. Between 1935 and 1947, therefore, the role of the Government of India in education was again broadened and the several functions which had fallen into disuse between 1923 to 1935 were again resumed. For example, the co-ordinating function was resumed with great vigour and the Central Advisory Board of Education addressed itself to the study and discussion of almost every field of educational activity and finally prepared, and presented to the nation, a plan for the educational development in India during the next 40 years

(1944). The publication function was also resumed and the reconstituted Central Bureau brought out a large number of publications on different aspects of the educational problem in India. The clearing house function was continued and its extent and efficiency were improved. The only functions developed in the earlier period and not resumed now were two—research and financial assistance. In spite of these limitations, however, the larger and more significant role that was now being played by the Government of India was appreciated all over the country; and the general feeling was that this role needs to be further strengthened and extended.

19. This brief historical survey of the role of the Government of India in education will show that it has passed through a number of stages. Prior to 1833, it had hardly any role to play; between 1833 and 1870, education was virtually a Central subject; between 1870 and 1921, the day-to-day administration was vested in Provincial Governments, but the Government of India discharged five distinct functions, *viz.*, the functions of policy-making, clearing house of information, research and publications, co-ordination and financial assistance; between 1921 and 1935, the wheels of the clock were turned back and there was an almost total divorce between education and the Central Government; but fortunately, more progressive policies were adopted after 1935 and the Government of India began to play, once again, a larger and a more fruitful role in education.

* Report, p. 346

LECTURE III

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AT ALLAHABAD (1867-87)

The origin of the Allahabad University may be traced to a proposal made by the British Indian Association of North-Western Provinces, Aligarh, of which the late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was a leading member. This Association submitted a memorial to the Governor-General on 1st August 1867 which pointed out that the use of English as the exclusive medium of instruction in the Calcutta University confined the benefits of higher education to a few persons and that it also prevented the students from acquiring a deep and abiding knowledge of the subjects learnt and made the following four demands:

- “(1) That a system of public education of the highest class be established, in which the arts, sciences, and other branches of literature may be taught through the instrumentality of the Vernacular ;
- (2) That an examination in the Vernacular be annually held in those very subjects in which the student is now examined in English in the Calcutta University;
- (3) That degrees now conferred on English students for proficiency in various departments of knowledge, be likewise conferred on the students who successfully pass in the same subjects in the Vernacular ; and
- (4) That either a Vernacular Department be attached to the Calcutta University, or an independent Vernacular University be created for the North-Western Provinces.”

2. The wisdom and foresight shown by this document can hardly be over-praised; but it obviously advocated policies

which were too radical for those early days and it is, therefore, no surprise that these requests were turned down. In its reply to this petition, the Government of India admitted that the views expressed by the Aligarh memorialists were fundamentally sound. It, however, felt that “the Vernaculars of the country do not as yet afford the materials for conveying instruction of the comparatively high order contemplated by the British Indian Association.” Copies of the Memorial and of the Government’s reply thereto were, however, sent to the Government of Punjab which, was agitating for a separate Punjab University and to the Government of N.W.P. It was now suggested that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab should get in touch with the Lt. Governor of N.W.P. and that they should make a joint proposal for the establishment of a University of Northern India as a whole. But since Sir Donald Macleod, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, showed no inclination to work out the suggestion, Sir William Muir, the Lieutenant-Governor of N.W. Provinces and Oudh, decided to examine the issue independently for his own Province and to submit his own proposals on the subject to the Government of India.

3. He consulted three officials on the subject—Mr. M. S. Howell, a former Inspector of Schools; Mr. H. S. Reid, the former Director of Public Instruction; and Mr. Kempson, the Director of Public Instruction. Messrs. Reid and Howell agreed that the conditions essential for the establishment of a new university did not then exist in the North-Western Provinces or even in the Punjab; that English should be studied as a compulsory subject but not used as a medium of instruction ; that the modern Indian languages should be adopted as the media of instruction, first in secondary schools and then in the colleges also ; and that these objectives could be achieved by introducing some modifications in the Calcutta University. Mr. Kempson did not share the warm enthusiasm of Messrs. Howell and Reid for the adoption of modern Indian languages as media of instruction. But he agreed with them on two main points : (1) that the educational situation

in the N. W. Provinces did not justify the creation of a new university and (2) that some modification of the Calcutta University was necessary if the needs of the N. W. Provinces were to be properly met. He, therefore, suggested that there should be a Branch Syndicate of the Calcutta University for Upper India. "I would locate this Syndicate", he wrote, "at Allahabad, and place within its jurisdiction the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, the Central Provinces, Rajpootana and Bihar. It would have a Vice-Chancellor and a Registrar of its own, the former of whom would confer degrees by license from the Chancellor at Calcutta, and have the power in concert with his Syndicate of managing the business of standards and tests under subordination to the Calcutta Senate."

4. With this advice before him, Sir William Muir, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, came to the conclusion that the educational situation in his Province did not justify the establishment of a new university; and he suggested the following modifications of the Calcutta University to make its influence more effectively in the North-Western Provinces :

- (1) A greater representation should be given to persons from the North-Western Provinces in the Senate of the Calcutta University ;
- (2) A branch of the Senate of the Calcutta University should be established in these Provinces ; and
- (3) A convocation should be annually held at Allahabad for confirmation of degrees granted by the Calcutta University.

5. These proposals were forwarded by the Government of India to the Calcutta University for its opinion. Mr. E. C. Bayley, the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University (who was also the Secretary to the Government of India in charge of education) was inclined to accept the proposal that greater representation should be given to persons from the N. W.

Provinces in the Senate of the Calcutta University ; and he even suggested the revision of the rules for the transaction of business at the meetings of the Senate with a view to giving a greater opportunity to absent members for participation in the deliberations through written minutes. He was also prepared to consider the holding of an annual convocation at Allahabad. But he strongly opposed the idea of having a Branch Syndicate for the N. W. Provinces on the ground that the authority of Syndicate at Calcutta must continue to be undivided, an argument which has a strong and obvious justification. Then turning to the two major problems of encouragement of Oriental literature and the adoption of modern Indian languages as media of instruction, Mr. Bayley proposed that the examinations for university entrance should be optionally conducted in the modern Indian languages and that in some examinations, the students may be permitted to substitute English by a higher standard of attainment in the classical languages. The Calcutta University accepted these views and decided, in its meeting held on 29th January, 1872, (a) that for the better encouragement of Vernacular education and literature, an examination in Vernacular be instituted by the University, on the plan of the middle-class examinations conducted by British universities ; (b) that a convocation for conferring degrees upon graduates of the North-West Provinces, the Punjab, Oudh and the Central Provinces be held annually at Allahabad ; (c) that notices of meetings of the Faculty of Arts for the discussion of all business of importance be circulated to all members, resident and non-resident, in order that any minute they may forward to the Registrar may be laid before the meeting of the Faculty ; (d) that Persian be added to the list of second languages for the First Arts and B. A. examinations ; and (e) that as part of the Entrance Examination in Oriental languages, the examiners shall set a paper containing passages in English to be translated into one of the Vernaculars of India at the option of the candidates, the passages being taken from a newspaper on other current literature of the day.

Detailed rules for the conduct of the examinations in the modern Indian languages were also framed and thus the first phase of this long controversy came to an end.

6. Even as early as 1869, the Lieutenant-Governor of the N. W. Provinces opined that his great need was, not a university, but the establishment of a College at Allahabad. The establishment of the Lahore University College in the same year also acted as a stimulus to a further effort in this direction; and on 15th August 1869, a memorial signed by 55 citizens of Allahabad (who had donated about Rs. 17,000 in total) requested the early establishment of a College at Allahabad, the capital of the N. W. Provinces. The original idea was that this College should cater to the needs of N. W. Provinces as well as to those of Oudh. But the Chief Commissioner of Oudh opined that the needs of Oudh in higher education were already being met by the Canning College at Lucknow and that the people of his area would not be interested in contributing to the establishment of a College at Allahabad. The proposal was, therefore, restricted to the North-Western Provinces only and, on this basis, the Government of N. W. Provinces submitted a detailed proposal for the approval of the Government of India in May, 1870. By this time the total amount of contributions collected had risen to Rs. 1,74,955 including "the princely contribution of a lakh of rupees by the Maharajah of Vizianagram and large sums from His Highness the Nawab of Rampore, Maharajas of Rewah and Banaras and other leading chiefs and landholders in these Provinces." The proposal made by Government had three main features :

- (a) The establishment of a University College at Allahabad which would also be combined with a High School;
- (b) The concentration of the teaching power in the Central College at Allahabad, by transferring the staff, wherever necessary and possible, from the other

colleges in the Provinces to the proposed College at Allahabad; and

- (c) Assisting the building of the College with a grant-in-aid of Rs. 50,000 from the Government funds.

7. The Government of India accepted, in principle, the proposal to establish a College at Allahabad. In doing so, however, it pointed out that "the Government of India offer no opinion at present to the desirability of establishing a University in the North-Western Provinces, or to acquiesce immediately in the withdrawal of the new College from the influence of the Calcutta University." Secondly, the Government of India also did not like the idea of combining the College at Allahabad with a High School and suggested that the two should be kept separate. Thirdly, the Government of India did not appreciate the suggestion that the status of the other Colleges in the N. W. Provinces may be reduced in order to build up the College at Allahabad, and desired that the efficiency of the Banares College, to the maintenance of which it was pledged, should not be adversely affected. Subject to these limitations, the Government of India appreciated the large donations given by the people towards the project and directed that further steps towards the establishment of the College may now be taken. Permission was also given to reappropriate Rs. 50,000 for the College building from savings elsewhere. The correspondence was also submitted to the Secretary of State for India who approved of the above orders and wrote. "I trust that hereafter the College at Allahabad may expand into a University for the North Western-Provinces and for the Punjab."

8. On receipt of these orders, the Government of N.W. Provinces finalised its scheme for the establishment of the College at Allahabad which began to function from 1st July 1872. With this achievement, the position in the N. W. Provinces became somewhat similar to that in the Punjab because both areas now had central colleges which were

looked upon as nuclei of future universities and it may also be said that, with this achievement, the second phase of this history comes to an end.

9. The third and the final stage in the establishment of the Allahabad University began in 1883 when the Indian Education Commission recommended that a new university may be established with advantage at Allahabad to meet the needs of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh and the Central Provinces. This recommendation was accepted by the Government of India who wrote, in October 1884, to the Government of the N. W. Provinces and Oudh that "the Governor-General in Council is willing to consider the question of establishing a separate University for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh with, perhaps, the Central Provinces. The Government of India would be glad to receive the Lieutenant-Governor's proposals on this subject at an early date." The Director of Public Instruction, N. W. Provinces and Oudh, was thereupon asked to consult the various interests involved and to submit a detailed scheme. He, therefore, wrote a letter to several officials and non-officials and called for their suggestions on the various issues involved. From the large body of opinions received, I would just quote two as illustrative of the interest of the correspondence as a whole.

10. The first is a note by Bireshwar Mitter, Professor of Law in the Banaras College who put forward the plea that Banaras, and not Allahabad, was better suited to be the seat of the new university. "The Muir Central College", he wrote "is an institution of abnormal growth, without any of the traditionary influence which comes from its own associations. Banaras, as the sacred city of the Hindus, has for ages past been the seat of Brahmanical learning. It has had a college, in the Western sense of the term, in full vigour and activity long before Sir William Muir dreamt of the central college at the capital of the provincial Government. Banaras is the Oxford of India in point of learning and culture; Allahabad is but the mushroom of yesterday's growth. Transfer all the

teaching capacity of the Allahabad college to Banaras, and with it the institution will acquire a position which its rival of Allahabad will never attain to. The population of Allahabad is an ever-floating one; in Banaras people live and work and die. The present reduced condition of Banaras is due to the fact that the central college has been enriched at its expense. An Oxford could not be transplanted into London; it will grow on its own soil. Without expatiating on this subject any further, I may be permitted to observe that the existence of the two State Colleges, in both the oriental and English departments, is a matter of necessity." The second is a note from Mr. M. S. Howell who compared Hindi and Urdu. "There are only two vernaculars of any importance in these provinces", he wrote, "Urdu and English. Some add a third, which they call Hindi; but if Hindi includes Arabic and Persian words in its vocabulary, it is a mere variety of Urdu; and if, as is sometimes asserted by its partisans, it altogether excludes such words, then, so far as my experience goes, it is a purely imaginary language, having no existence in the tongues of men, women or children. The fact is that all the natives in these Provinces use Arabic and Persian words, the degree of admixture varying partly with the abstruseness and complexity of the subject, and partly with the race, birth-place, social position, education, and profession of the speaker. The objection of Hindus to calling their language by the Persian name (Urdu) is purely sentimental; and probably the whole controversy might be avoided by the use of some neutral term like Hindustani. But whatever a student's vernacular be, he ought to be taught and examined in it, because it is the language that he thinks in. The present practice of requiring native students to learn higher mathematics in English is as absurd as the ancient practice of requiring English students to learn them in Latin, since disguise of the form tends to produce confusion of the substance."

11. Mr. White, the Director of Public Instruction in the N. W. Provinces and Oudh, formulated an interesting scheme

for the Allahabad University. His main contention was that it should not be a purely affiliating University like Calcutta. He was of the view that the proposed University at Allahabad should essentially be a teaching University which would utilise the college at Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, Banaras and Aligarh as its constituent units. "A condition to the attainment of a degree", he wrote, "should be residence in a high college and attendance on the lectures of approved professors. If, then, the ground were unencumbered with the fabrics of existing colleges, the best course would be to make the university co-extensive with a single college ; we could thus obtain a staff of professors such as has never been collected in one Indian college. The numbers of the students and professors would give a corporate power to the university such as it will take a long time to acquire if they remain scattered over many colleges, for each of which they are insufficient. Each degree could then be given not merely on the result of an examination, but as the final stamp of the university or a college career every stage of which had been under the eyes of the professors who granted the degree. Such a college and university would in a few years leave a stronger mark on education than any college at present existing in this country. It would, moreover, speedily become the centre of intellectual life of these Provinces, and an *alma mater* to which every professional man might look back with affection and reverence, to which from time to time he would delight to return, and upon which he would perhaps bestow part of that wealth which it had trained him to accumulate. If all our colleges were collected into one teaching university, we should possess an institution which would command respect in the educational world, and eventually become one of its great universities. The time might come for other universities to arise by its side, for the progress of education in these Provinces might be so rapid under the policy I advocate, that not one but several universities would be required.

"There are, however, special difficulties in the way of carrying out such a scheme. We have apparently no alterna-

tive but to accept Allahabad as the seat of such a university, and Allahabad is hardly a suitable place for it. It will be very difficult to ignore the claims of the colleges at Lucknow, Agra, Aligarh, and Banaras, for all these would be extinguished by such a proceeding. If the only entry into professional life was through the University of Allahabad, hardly a student would be found to enter their class-rooms, and they would be reduced to the functions of high schools—functions which they might perform most admirably, better than they now do those of colleges. Any course, however, which would have this result would involve the opposition of influential bodies ; the existing professors would have to be provided for, and few of them would be fitted for professorships in the Allahabad University. Though I would on general grounds advocate the foundation of such a university, I do not think it would be expedient to weight ourselves with the opposition it would arouse. We must recognize our existing colleges and endeavour to incorporate them into one teaching university. I have laid stress on the point that as a preliminary condition of the university degree a student should live in close and prolonged intercourse with European professors of high culture and character, in order that he may learn not merely the commonplaces of the advanced thought of Europe, but become imbued with the spirit of European culture and a high sense of duty ; for this can be learnt best from human intercourse and perhaps it cannot be learnt otherwise. This condition is more important than the absorption of the amount of learning required by the university examinations. Thus, every one of our colleges would be required to maintain a very high standard in its professional staff in order to justify its incorporation in the university. I do not think there is then any possibility of our recognizing any colleges besides those of Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Banaras and Allahabad, and the grounds upon which I would have advocated the foundation of a single university co-existent with its colleges, would deter me from recommending any further extension in the number of colleges ; all the meagre institutions now

called colleges should devote themselves to their proper function, that performed by the high schools or *gymnasias* of Germany.

“The practical problem, then, is to combine these five colleges into a teaching university. In the first place, I would, for the present, confine our university to the Faculty of Arts. Whether the theological faculty will ever be developed, we cannot say. Law and Medicine are special studies which must be taken up by our students after their general education has been completed, and at present we are not engaged in the question of technical training, but with that preliminary education which I have assumed to be its necessary preliminary. These faculties must be eventually combined in our university as they are in the great universities of Europe, and not until they are so combined will the term *universities studiorum* be properly applicable to our institution. For the present, however, they need not be considered.”

13. These suggestions have been quoted in extenso because this was the first time that the creation of a teaching university was being discussed. But unfortunately this most important of Mr. White's suggestion was not accepted, although he had made it very clear that he would prefer to continue under Calcutta rather than have a purely examining university at Allahabad.

14. These proposals were forwarded by the Government of the N. W. Provinces and Oudh to the Government of India on 7th August, 1886. In this letter, the Provincial Government was very eloquent in establishing the need for a new university at Allahabad. But it watered down the main proposal of Mr. White—to have a teaching university, very considerably. It said :

“The University, therefore, which it is proposed to establish would, for the present at least, confine its operations to the direction of the methods and aims of instruction; adapting them to the needs, circumstances, traditions, and predilections of a country that is rapidly recovering its forward place in the intellectual progress of India. This circumscrip-

tion of its function is the less to be regretted, as it may be hoped that the Muir College recently opened at Allahabad may secure, to a limited and provisional degree, yet not wholly inadequate, most of the objects for which a teaching University is required. If that college continues to receive the support that it may reasonably expect, it should establish a very prominent position in the provinces, and maintain a standard of academical training which would be emulated and imitated by the coordinate institutions in other neighbouring cities.

“All, then, that need be provided for the present, is a Senate, with a Syndicate and a Registrar. Minor details may be left to be selected hereafter; but His Honour anticipates no difficulty in finding sufficient material for a Senate of fifty or sixty members, of whom a certain fixed minimum proportion should be native residents of the provinces. The Senate would contain representatives of the local administration of the High Court, of the legal profession, and of all who are engaged in, or are conversant with, the practical work of education, or who take interest in the higher branches of science and literature. All questions of great and general importance would be brought before this body; but the ordinary duties of administration would be discharged by a Syndicate consisting of from five to ten members, and including one or more representatives for each of the faculties of the recognized university curriculum. These would necessarily reside in Allahabad; and one of their most important duties would be the appointment of examiners to conduct the periodical examinations. The examiners would either be drawn from members of the Educational Service, or the duty might be delegated to competent men in other parts of India.”

15. All that was now proposed was, therefore, to establish another university on the pattern of Calcutta and the only concession made to the proposals of Mr. White was to include an enabling provision in the University Act to the effect that the University may assume teaching functions at a later date, should they be deemed necessary. It was, therefore, not difficult

for the Government of India to recommend these proposals to the Secretary of State for India and for the Secretary of State to sanction them. The Allahabad University Act, 1887, was, therefore, passed and brought into force on 23rd September, 1887, exactly twenty years after the proposal was first put forward by the British Indian Association of Aligarh on 1st August, 1867. This Act is on the usual traditional lines except for the fact that it authorizes the Senate to provide for the appointment of Professors and Lecturers. These enabling provisions of the Allahabad University Act were, however, ineffective in practice and this University also continued to be a purely examining University, the main reason for this failure being the unwillingness of the Government to provide funds required for the purpose.
